

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Writing Prompts

Epilogue

MISSION US: "Prisoner in My Homeland"

Read through all the topics. Then choose one of them to write about. Write the title of the piece at the top of your page. Write in complete sentences. After you are finished, proofread your work for correctness.

FAMILY BONDS. In this last part of *Prisoner in My Homeland*, you are exposed to the many life changes that the Tanaka family undergoes. They move to a new prison camp in Idaho. Henry makes a series of decisions that will alter the course of his life, whether it be choosing to attend college or enlisting to serve in the military. No matter the choice, Henry and his family drift apart as each family member moves to a new, faraway place. Can you think of a time in your own life--or it could be in a book you've read or a movie that you've seen--in which a family was changed due to hardship or members leaving home? Describe what happened to the family and how the change reshaped the family.

MAKING HARD CHOICES. In the final part of the game, Henry faces a series of tough decisions. His family was moved to another prison camp at Minidoka in Idaho. Henry has to decide whether he will enlist or resist the military. He has to consider whether he will pursue a college education or remain with his family for the duration of the war. Consider a time when you or a family member had to make a hard decision. Write any important background information and explain what decision was faced. What happened as a result? In what ways did your life change or not change? In thinking about it, do you think you made the right choice? Explain!

RETURNING TO "NORMAL LIFE." The last part of the game covers what happens to the Tanaka family after World War II ends. Very few Japanese American families were able to return to the same communities that they lived in before the camps. Many people moved to new cities all across the United States to attend college, start new jobs, and have families. Others returned to the West Coast, finding their former homes completely changed and encountering people hostile to their return. Write about this process of starting over. What struggles do you think Japanese Americans faced after the war? Has there been a time in your own life where you or your family had to start over and try to establish a normal life?

A FIGHT FOR JUSTICE. In the aftermath of World War II, Japanese American activists and allies led a decades-long effort to demand justice for their illegal imprisonment. These collective actions are called the "Redress Movement," meaning that Japanese Americans called for the U.S. government to acknowledge and correct their wrongdoing. As a part of this movement, a special government commission was set up in 1980. Survivors of the prison camps shared their

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stories, engaging in a process of truth-telling and documentation of their experience. In 1988, President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, which offered a formal apology and issued \$20,000 to surviving Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II.

Why do you think it was so important for Japanese Americans to receive an apology and repayment for losses? Do you think that such wrongs in history can be "repaired"? What are the benefits of laws like the Civil Liberties Act? What are its limits?

MEMORIALIZATION. You learn in the final part of the game about "pilgrimages" that some Japanese Americans made to the former prisons that once incarcerated their families. A "pilgrimage" is a journey to a place that has a meaningful history or religious importance. Attending these pilgrimages is one way in which survivors and their families come together to heal from their painful experiences and losses.

Many communities have found ways to remember difficult events and histories. Can you think of a place that you have been to that "memorializes" a part of history? Write about this place and describe it in detail. Next, discuss some of your impressions of the place. What did you learn about this history? Why should people remember it? What effect did it have on you to visit this place?

HISTORY AND MEMORY. At the very end of the game, Henry Tanaka's sister Lily, now in her 90's, says, "History has many layers. Without uncovering those layers, how can we learn?" What do you think she means by this statement? Why is it so important to remember history, especially events like the World War II-era Japanese American incarceration period? Then, write about the impact of learning this history on you. In interacting with the Tanaka family's story, what did you take away? Write a reflection on Lily's final words in the game and any of your own takeaways from learning this story.